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President: Mr. Drobnjak (Vice-President) ..... (Croatia)
later: Ms. Mejía Vélez (Vice-President) ..... (Colombia)

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Regional cooperation (E/2015/15, E/2015/15/Add.1 and E/2015/15/Add.2)

Dialogue with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions on the topic "Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take at the regional level"

1. **Mr. Somavía** (Director, Andrés Bello Diplomatic Academy of Chile; former Director-General, International Labour Organization), moderator, introducing the topic of the discussion, said that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development had marked the beginning of a growing recognition of the important role of the regional commissions in the United Nations system. They were its link to the real-life social and political processes in the regions, as well as the regions' link to the higher levels of the system.

2. **Ms. Khalaf** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), panellist, said that the increasing impact of the regional and global environment on national development outcomes necessitated an integrated approach to policymaking. To help countries optimize their approach to the interrelated sustainable development goals and other cross-cutting issues, the Commission had created a dynamic set of models and analytical tools to capture the relationships between policies, goals and subregional or regional variables on the one hand and development outcomes on the other. That comprehensive framework addressed, inter alia, the water-energy nexus, the growth-employment-social protection nexus, and a conflict-development nexus that had already been used to develop a comprehensive national agenda for the post-conflict reconstruction of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Commission was also working with individual States to build integrated national development frameworks, and it was collaborating with Member States and the League of Arab States on a regional development framework for determining the national costs and benefits of regional integration, which it had already used to assess the subregional impact of the Syrian crisis, the Libyan crisis and the Israeli Gaza offensive. Lastly, it was facilitating knowledge-sharing between countries transferring its expertise in modelling to national regional institutions in order to build their capacit integrate development goals.

3. **Ms. Akhtar** (Executive Secretary, United Nat Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific), panellist, said that at the request of Mem States, the Commission had recently prepared a g entitled *Balancing the Three Dimensions Sustainable Development: From Integration Implementation*, which emphasized reconciling so needs with planetary boundaries, developing metric measure progress in terms of all three dimension sustainable development and factoring the finite na of planetary resources into policies and plans. In 20 it had issued a publication entitled *Low Carbon G Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific*, presen more than 50 case studies of successful practi including many in the Asia-Pacific region itself. Commission had also constructed a multidimensio inclusiveness index to score the region's econom Asia continued to be a leading investor in g technologies. Among the countries in the Asia-Pac region, China, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Viet Nam already developed green growth strategies and pl Under a regional road map for implementing the p 2015 development agenda adopted in May at the A Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, Commission was mandated to work on capa development, the sharing of best practices, inclusive and green growth strategies.

4. **Ms. Bárcena** (Executive Secretary, Un Nations Economic and Social Commission for L America and the Caribbean), panellist, said that du the Millennium Development Goal period, the L American and Caribbean States had been able to millions out of poverty basically through social pol thanks in large part to a booming economy. In contr given the very different economic environment and ambitious nature of the new agenda, achieving sustainable development goals would require l decisions and difficult trade-offs. It would impossible without shifting from a culture of privil to a culture of equality, ensuring fair distributio productivity gains between capital and labour arriving at a new development model based on sustainable management of natural resources intergenerational solidarity. With their many subsid bodies, the regional commissions were well place

understand what was happening at the national level and to know if countries had structures such as national planning institutions and statistics systems that were necessary to implement the new agenda. They could also be instrumental in involving private-sector and civil society stakeholders in the sustainable development process.

5. **Mr. Somavía** (Director, Andrés Bello Diplomatic Academy of Chile; former Director-General, International Labour Organization), said that one way to tie what was happening at the regional level to what was happening in New York might be to have the Bureau of the Council attend the five regional forums on sustainable development.

6. **Mr. Bach** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), panellist, said that the transition to the sustainable development goals required intergovernmental structures, which was exactly what the regional commissions had to offer. The Economic Commission for Europe had already spearheaded effective conventions and agreements on air and water quality, transport infrastructure and vehicle safety, and it was working on setting pan-European energy standards for construction. Its Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme coordinated the efforts of United Nations institutions and intergovernmental, private-sector and civil society stakeholders. Its statistical body had compiled the first set of standards for sustainable development statistics. With respect to monitoring and review, it was experienced in organizing regional peer review mechanisms and was working with the countries in the region on possible approaches to reviewing performance on the sustainable development goals. Acting as the regional forum on sustainable development, the Commission had endorsed a high-level statement on the post-2015 development agenda and proposed sustainable development goals at its sixty-sixth session (E/ECE/1475).

7. **Mr. Hamdok** (Deputy Executive Secretary of Knowledge Generation, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa), panellist, said that the Commission was working with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank to ensure the availability of reliable data and statistics, which would be imperative for follow-up and review of the post-2015 development agenda. Like the other regional commissions, it had instituted a regional forum on sustainable development and a regional coordination mechanism, both of which would be very helpful in the tracking, assessment and follow-up processes. The regional coordination mechanism provided support to the African Union and was fully aligned with its priorities, including its Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and Agenda 2063, which laid out medium- and long-term goals, priorities and strategies. The Commission had recently set up a voluntary, unconditional and mutually agreed African Peer Review Mechanism that encouraged national ownership, interaction and accountability between policymakers and citizens, and the sharing of lessons learned at the highest levels. With a few adjustments — primarily bringing in environmental issues — it would be perfectly suited for tracking performance on the sustainable development goals. Another potentially useful mechanism was the Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness in Africa, conducted jointly each year by the Commission and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Interactive discussion

8. **Ms. Kudasova** (Russian Federation) said that the basic function of the regional commissions should continue to be the provision of technical assistance to enable countries to exercise their right to development. However, they should also be in charge of regional reviews of sustainable development, which might take the form of voluntary presentations on one or more goals, either by individual countries or by groups of countries belonging to a regional structure such as the European Union or the Eurasian Economic Union. Summaries of presentations made in the relevant sectoral committees could be submitted to the executive committees and thence to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Such an approach was preferable to peer review, since it allowed joint review of States with similar economic and social development levels and, in many cases, shared economic and social agendas. Of course, it would be necessary to define the terms and procedures as well as the sources of funding.

9. The Russian Federation attached great importance to enhanced cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Social and Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific. At the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June, the Chair of the Eurasian Economic Commission had stressed the importance of

working with the European Union to arrive at a shared vision of the future, without which it would be difficult to move forward on sustainable development. As to the Asia-Pacific region, her country agreed with the Secretary-General on the need to strengthen partnerships among existing regional and subregional mechanisms, and would be grateful if the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Social and Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific would share her vision of stronger regional partnerships.

10. **Mr. Castro** (Guatemala) said that Member States were proposing that the regional commissions should assume regional leadership in the sustainable development process by building partnerships, promoting actions and programmes and coordinating the work agendas of regional intergovernmental bodies and financial mechanisms. However, to discharge their new responsibilities, they would need stronger capacities, including increased financial resources.

11. **Ms. Camacho** (Observer for Mexico) said that countries had primary responsibility for implementing the sustainable development goals and would therefore need stronger tracking and assessment mechanisms. Nevertheless, the regional mechanisms had the necessary perspective for many assessment activities and were also critical for ensuring comparable results. Relevant regional indicators and regional capacity-building would be vital. Mexico advocated a peer review mechanism for regional-level reviews because it would allow much deeper dialogue. Whatever the regional or global follow-up mechanisms chosen, the participation of civil society and other important stakeholders would be essential.

12. **Mr. Kabaev** (Kyrgyzstan) called on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to participate actively in the development of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Kyrgyzstan and to take steps to reinvigorate the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The delegations were invited to attend his country's voluntary presentation on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, to be held the following morning.

13. **Ms. Akhtar** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), responding to the representative of the Russian Federation, said that the Commission stood ready to promote connectivity in the Euro-Asian corridor. It worked closely with other regional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was intensifying efforts to implement the blueprint for the ASEAN Economic Community. It was also very much involved in the national development strategies of the Centre for Environment and Development Studies, and it was engaged in proactive dialogue with the soon-to-be-launched Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank — a very substantial example of effective South-South cooperation. With respect to statistics, the Commission was assessing statistical gaps in the subregions, had launched the Asia and Pacific Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Decade 2015-2024 and would be working closely with national statistical bodies to strengthen their capacities.

14. **Ms. Bárcena** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) welcomed the emphasis on strengthening the leadership role of the regional commissions which, as intermediaries between the Council and regional and subregional institutions, including banks, could help to align national, regional and global agendas. They could also play a role in identifying critical nexuses, such as the education-work nexus; ensuring comparability; choosing indicators; and identifying structural gaps.

15. **Mr. Bach** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) said that the Commission would continue to work with the Eurasian Economic Community, the European Union and individual Member States to strengthen cross-border and interregional cooperation, in line with the Russian Federation's call for a common economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific and its own historic mission. It was already collaborating on the development of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Kyrgyzstan, and it was working hard to prepare for the interagency consultations on strengthening the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, to be held in Kyrgyzstan in November in association with the tenth session of the SPECA Governing Council and Economic Forum. It hoped that one of the outcomes of the session would be a regional declaration of commitment to the sustainable development goals.

16. **Mr. Hamdok** (Deputy Executive Secretary of Knowledge Generation, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa) welcomed the support expressed for the peer review mechanism. The African Union's Agenda 2063 signalled a return to long-term planning, and the Commission was working with countries in the region to design strategic capacity-building interventions and provide other technical assistance in that connection.

17. **Ms. Khalaf** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), speaking as Coordinator of the Regional Commissions, said that the sustainable development goals were in some respects beyond the means of any one country. The regional commissions had the capacity to work with countries individually or collectively, as regional groupings, on integrating the three pillars of sustainable development and the new goals with their policies. They had already established the regional forums on sustainable development, which could play an important role both in monitoring implementation and in linking the regions to the high-level political forum and the Council. She agreed with the moderator that having the Bureau attend the regional forums would be extremely helpful.

18. **Mr. Somavía** (Director, Andrés Bello Diplomatic Academy of Chile; former Director-General, International Labour Organization), summing up the dialogue, also suggested that the Bureau might attend a meeting of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions.

The meeting was suspended at 4.35 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

19. *Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Panel discussion on the topic "Implementing a post-2015 agenda that works for the least developed countries"

20. **Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf** (Observer for Liberia), President of the Republic, delivering the keynote address, said that the Millennium Development Goals had been an important tool for human development. However, their overall success masked the limited achievements in most of the least developed countries, due to their failure to take ownership of goals set by others and to a methodology that overlooked differences in conditions and capacities. Liberia had nevertheless made considerable progress, despite a recent growth slump triggered by falling commodity prices and exacerbated by the Ebola crisis. Its experience with the Ebola epidemic highlighted the importance of developing infrastructure and providing training to respond to public health challenges.

21. The post-2015 development agenda must give special priority to helping the least developed countries catch up. Fortunately, as the fruit of broad consultations, the proposed sustainable development goals were more likely to encourage ownership, and most were related either directly or indirectly to the Millennium Development Goals. The least developed countries would need to build the new goals and targets into their national development strategies, working in close collaboration with their national statistical houses and the financial and development institutions. Critical policy areas for structural transformation included the elaboration of relevant macroeconomic policies; mobilization of financial resources and industrial policies to direct those resources to the appropriate sectors and activities; investment in rural development and industrialization; promotion of synergies between the modernization of agriculture and the development of non-farm rural production; improvement of revenue administration, and continued promotion of a universal, transparent and inclusive multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization; and meaningful liberalization in a trading system that encouraged long-term investment in productive capacity.

22. The outcome document of the third International Conference on Financing for Development would need to identify obstacles, define commitments and create or strengthen mechanisms to ensure predictable and secure resources for development. It must also support country-led and country-owned transitions from conflict, in accordance with the principles set out in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States by the Group of Seven Plus. To implement a new global agenda that worked for the least developed countries, development assistance should be coordinated with national development programmes and priorities. Success would also depend in large measure on the involvement of all stakeholders, including civil society organizations, national parliaments, the media and the private sector.

23. **Mr. Acharya** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), panellist, said that while there had been significant progress globally in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, that progress had been uneven among and within countries. Most of the least developed countries, for example, would not achieve all those Goals. The international community would therefore need to take into account the specific challenges facing those countries in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

24. The least developed countries would also need to integrate that agenda into their national development strategies and develop appropriate indicators to measure progress in that regard. They would therefore need support from the United Nations system and the international community to build their national statistical capacities. Furthermore, there must be strong emphasis on building national capacity to develop the cross-sectoral policies required to implement an integrated agenda. For monitoring and follow-up purposes, it would be necessary to broaden existing country review mechanisms to cover the review of the new development agenda.

25. With respect to funding for the implementation of that agenda, it was essential to quantify the investment required in each sector and to design a supportive macroeconomic framework which should be backed by a practical financing strategy that included both domestic and external resources. The least developed countries would also require committed support from development partners in order to achieve the sustainable development goals in a timely and effective manner. Some of that assistance should therefore be used to leverage trade, investment and other resources by funding productive capacity development. Developing infrastructure, building resilience and technology leapfrogging were also critical.

26. **Mr. Lehman** (Chairman and President of the International Intellectual Property Institute and member of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries), panellist, said that the High-level Panel's immediate purpose was to evaluate the feasibility of creating a technology bank for least developed countries. The bank would have three components: a research depository, a patents bank and a science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism. The first two already existed. Thus the success of the technology bank hinged on the feasibility of the supporting mechanism, which should ease technology transfer and involve experts in ensuring that transferred technologies were used effectively. Given the cross-border nature of many problems, facilitating and improving technology transfer would benefit everyone, as in the case of the Ebola epidemic, when transmission of the disease in developed countries could have been prevented by following protocols developed in Liberia.

27. **Ms. Montas** (Independent Broadcast Journalist, former Spokesperson for the Secretary-General and former Director-General of Radio Haiti-Inter), moderator, said that the President of Liberia had attributed the limited success of the Millennium Development Goals in least developed countries partially to their failure to assume ownership of the Goals. She asked the panellists how those countries could be encouraged to take ownership of the sustainable development goals.

28. **Mr. Acharya** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that, unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the proposed goals would be the product of extensive consultations at the national, regional and international levels, resulting in greater national ownership from the outset. The next step would be to ensure that the goals were appropriately integrated into the national development strategies of each country and that the support provided was tailored to the conditions of each country.

29. **Ms. Carroll** (United Kingdom) asked when the High-level Panel would present its report.

30. **Mr. Lehman** (Chairman and President of the International Intellectual Property Institute and member of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries) said that the Panel hoped to submit a report with recommendations for implementing the technology bank by mid-August.

31. **Mr. Morales López** (Colombia) asked how the United Nations regional commissions in particular and the United Nations system in general could help least developed countries implement the new development agenda.

32. **Mr. Lehman** (Chairman and President of the International Intellectual Property Institute and member of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries) said that the High-level Panel had yet to formulate its recommendations, but they might well include a regional approach.

33. **Mr. Acharya** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that achievement of the sustainable development goals in least developed countries would require action at the national, regional and global levels. Much could be learned from regional best practices. Integrating regional markets would help to build the capacities of the poorest countries. The regional commissions, the regional offices of United Nations system entities and the regional economic and political forums could all contribute to developing regional value chains, trade, infrastructure and resiliency, all of which were essential for successful implementation of the new agenda in the individual countries.

34. **Mr. Hasan** (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) said that technology could help least developed countries diversify their exports. He asked how affordable and how easy it would be for those countries to access the technology bank.

35. **Mr. Lehman** (Chairman and President of the International Intellectual Property Institute and member of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries) said that the least developed countries were exempt from the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights until 2021 and could therefore already access proprietary technologies without paying for them. Moreover, few inventors attempted to obtain intellectual property rights in those countries, which lacked the capacity to use the technologies without the inventors' assistance. The High-level Panel was looking for ways to help least developed countries build their capacity to develop and use technology effectively. For example, they should have the capacity to adapt first world technology for third world use.

36. **Mr. Acharya** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that the proposed technology bank, which already had considerable support from development partners, aimed to go beyond mere technology transfer to encompass technology diffusion and innovation.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.